

KM-0003

VAHE SEKDORIAN

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AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 87

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INTERVIEWER: KATE MOORE

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HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Mr. Sekdorian's wife is present during the interview and participates several times. She is referred to in the transcript as "WIFE."

MOORE: Good afternoon. This is Kate Moore from the National Park Service and today is the fourth of December 1993 and I'm in Southfield at the home of -- your first name is pronounced--

SEKDORIAN: Vahe—

MOORE: Vahe—

SEKDORIAN: Sekdorian.

MOORE: [superposed] Sekdorian. Right. Who came from Turkey when he was sixteen years old. And why don't you begin by giving me your full name and date of birth please.

SEKDORIAN: My phone number?

MOORE: Full name, and phone number if you like (laughs).

SEKDORIAN: Oh, oh. Sekdorian is my last name, and my first name is Vahe. V-A-H-E. And uh --

MOORE: And your date of birth.

SEKDORIAN: S—1908.

MOORE: And what month and day?

SEKDORIAN: You know, at – at that time – when I was – my parents didn't have any record at home, but I am uh – right now – eighty six years old. Eight—eighty five. Eighty five years old. Eighty five years old right now.

MOORE: And where – where were you born?

SEKDORIAN: Uh, the name of the city is sh—called Shabin Karahisar. It's a -- it's – it's not any close to Istanbul. It's interior.

MOORE: Could you spell the name of that town?

SEKDORIAN: Shabin, S-H-A-B-I-N, Karahisar, K-A-R-A-H-I-S-A-R. They're two separate words.

MOORE: Ok and um, what size of town was that?

SEKDORIAN: What kind of town?

MOORE: What size?

SEKDORIAN: Well s—small town. Uh, probably there were about ten thousand Armenians, and Greeks also. And majority were Turks.

MOORE: What kind town was it? What did it look like? What was the industry there – major industry?

SEKDORIAN: Well I was – I was very young. I – I don't have much i—information about – but it – shopkeepers and uh, merchants, that sort of thing.

MOORE: Now what was your father's name?

SEKDORIAN: My father's first name is Garabed, G-A-R-A-B-E-D, Garabed Sekdorian.

MOORE: And what – what did he do? What was his occupation?

SEKDORIAN: He was a merchant.

MOORE: A merchant.

SEKDORIAN: A merchant. (clanging in background)

MOORE: And what did he look like?

SEKDORIAN: Well he was – he was – he wasn't short like – like I am. He was tall, handsome, and he's very prominent. Prominent in church, affairs, and schools, things like that.

MOORE: What about his personality, his temperament – what was that like?

SEKDORIAN: Well (laughs) he – he was [not understood]. And uh, uh—but he was a good father. He took very good care of the family.

MOORE: And what did he h—h—what were his features? His eye color, his hair color?

SEKDORIAN: Well in those days, those places, they had mustache but no beards. Just mustache. But he was tall and very prominent and very effective.

MOORE: Dark hair?

SEKDORIAN: Dark hair, yeah. He had dark hair.

MOORE: And is there a story about your father that you associate with your childhood? Do you have any story that you think says something about your father in relation to you?

SEKDORIAN: Well he was [not understood] children. Discipline was just very important. That uh, some places – even in this country – families don't discipline their children very well. Discipline begins at – at – at home. And my father [not understood] disciplinarian. He gave us a good discipline. He make sure that they goes school, get education, and that sort of thing.

MOORE: And do you remember anything particular that sticks in your mind about him when you're kid? Any story about if you were ever real bad and how he disciplined you?

SEKDORIAN: Well, let me see what I can think of. Of course I had a uncle too. Well all I can say that he was – he make – he make sure that we live well, we are healthy, and disciplined. H—he's very disciplinarian.

MOORE: Yeah.

SEKDORIAN: [not understood] kind of man.

MOORE: What was your mother's name?

SEKDORIAN: I'm gonna spell it for you. (laughs) Vokoel, V-O-K-O-E-L, Vokoel.

MOORE: And what was her maiden name, do you remember?

SEKDORIAN: No, I don't remember. No I don't know.

MOORE: Um, what did she do –

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] Her—her – her – you – you mean her last name?

MOORE: Yes, before she married.

SEKDORIAN: Oh. Vezigian [not understood] V-E-Z-I-G-I-A-N. That's her last name.

MOORE: And what – did she – what did she do? Did she – for an occupation?

SEKDORIAN: Housewife.

MOORE: She's a housewife. And what does she look like?

SEKDORIAN: Well (laughs) she was very much respected. And she's a handsome woman. Good looking.

MOORE: [superposed] Is she – how about – well about her eyes and her hair color?

SEKDORIAN: I think brownish. Eyes are brownish, yeah. And (unintelligible voice in background) I – I don't have any pictures, yeah. Uh, of – of course you're gonna ask me some of the tragedies we had – Turks and Armenians over there and the massacre to Armenians over there. I lost my parents' ash and so the story's very long. The story's very, very long. And I lost my mother, I lost my – my – my father was – because he was very prominent they took him – they told him that they gonna have some conference or something. He never showed up. He was killed. And then (clanking in background) Armenians knew that something is brewing. So Armenians went up the hill [not understood]. They burned the houses onto the hill and they fought with the Turks one month and – meantime, they burned the homes, everything else – so it won't be in the hands of the Turks. But they always hoping that Russians will come save them but that did not happen. For one month they struggled and then there was shortage of water, shortage of food, and the [not understood] elderly people – something like over sixty years old – they escaped behind the mountain. They run a—they run away and – and left behind children, and women, and young girls. And then they send their women with the white handkerchief that they're giving in. Immediately the Soviets came up to this place – this mountain. And they surrounded – they were looking for men – there were women. There were children, boys, girls, and women, and they're crying. They all were crying. Then

they separated women and children. Women they took some other place, children they took some other place. And that's the last I saw my mother and my sister. And I had two brothers – two younger brothers. They were with me and then a (pause) Greek family adopted me. It was a baker. A young boy and they didn't have any children. They liked me very much -- they adopted me. So (pause) anyway, I was there for a couple of years or two years I -- I think – I don't quite remember. Russians were advancing – coming towards Turkey. And this time the Turks wanted all the Greeks who – who were hiding any Armenian boys or girls – must give to – to – Turkish soldiers. They collected all the Armenians left and took – took 'em away. [not understood]

MOORE: Were you taken away?

SEKDORIAN: I was taken away, yeah.

MOORE: [superposed] You were taken from the family?

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] C—c—c—from Greek family, yeah. And uh – and all the – our parents, everything else – they were driven to the Syrian deserts. And they did starve over there in the desert. No water, no food.

MOORE: You were there, in this too?

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] No, no I wasn't there. I wasn't there. And then (pause) they took me – well my two brothers – y—younger brothers – my sister was removed (another voice in background) – my sister was m—is m—my mother. She was older than myself. My brother was going college in the city – my older brother. So to make a story long, a Turkish family got interested in me and they had a – some cows and sheep to care of so I – I did that. I was – I was so desperate – I was so lonesome – I was so --

crying all the time. And then I wanted to go back to Shabin Karahisar again barefoot. I did – I did go there.

MOORE: You walked?

SEKDORIAN: I walked. I walked with a group of people that take merchandise, you know, from one city to another on horseback. I went with them on foot. And I'm looking for some – I'm looking for some Armenians over there. I found one – a shoemaker – an Armenian shoemaker. And he knew my father, of course. And he said that – I don't know what happened after that. I think h—there was another – Ar—Greek family here I think. He put me over there with a G—another Greek family. It's gonna be -- four years pass by and 1919 the war was over. Turks – Turks – Turks were defeated. (clanking in background) And the -- the Allies were – you know, they won the war. And thanks goodness American East Relief, you ever hear of that? American East Relief. They came and open orphanages in Sivas, in [not understood], in Izmir, in Constantinople, and [not understood]. They got me in this orphanage – in Sivas – is another – another city. There's one thing you w—you will surprise what happened. As I was in – in Sivas when I was walking. I reckons my cousin. I call his name. Just imagine! U—unbelievable! He was in a – in a orphanage over there.

MOORE: Did you have a big family? So this was – you had many cousins?
(laughs)

SEKDORIAN: Well, when – when they took me to his mother – th—this is in a different city. Sivas, they call it. And the—American – Americans would organize the orphanages already. And they put me in an Ar—American orphanage. They called American Near East Relief. For four years, they brought Armenians and uh – Armenian teachers and some American

supervisors. It was sponsored by – by United government and some Armenians over here. Four years, I stayed in a Near East Relief orphanage. I learned my English over there. And uh, somehow my aunt and my cousin went to – came to America. They couldn't take me because it wasn't – wasn't possible. So one day I told 'em that I want to come to America. [not understood] No, what happened? I forgot to mention – things got worse again in Turkish government. So the Americans thought that it's better to move this orphanage—orphans to some other country. So they take us – took us to Greece. I went to Greece. The whole orphanage went to Greece.

MOORE: Let's go back a little bit. You – when you last saw your mother, how old were you then? What age were you then?

SEKDORIAN: I couldn't tell you.

MOORE: Um, somewhere –

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] [not understood]

MOORE: [superposed] I mean how old – old were you before – when you were in the orphanage? From what years to what years? About what ages?

SEKDORIAN: Well I must have been ten years -- at least ten, eleven years old.

MOORE: Ten or eleven years old?

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] Maybe – oh maybe twelve years old. It's just a guess, just a guess. Transferred from Turkey to Greece. (clears throat) I was in Corinth—in – in Greece. And then – then I got a job in the American East-Relief Headquarters in Athens. They like me. I could speak little

English. Took me there. Then I asked my cousins in America – I want to come to America. And they help me. I came to A—America as a student, to study. To study, that's the only way I could come. As a student, to study. I came [not understood]. They ask me what you gonna study in America? I said I'm gonna study mathematics and engineering. And he ask me a couple questions in algebra and I knew it. I learned in school. And they said it's ok. The [not understood]. And they send me –

MOORE: [interposed] I have a few qu-- questions over this, for your memory.

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] It's a long story.

MOORE: [interposed] Yeah. But wait a minute I have some few questions. This is a memory test. If you go back to when -- before when you were with your family – your mother and your father. Before all this happened with your family brea—breaking up and the political situation. If you go back, do you remember your house? Do you remember where -- the house where you were when you were a small child?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah.

MOORE: And could you describe it? What was the house like when you were a small boy?

SEKDORIAN: It was a three-story building – big building. And when Armenians went to the mountains they burned everything. So they – it won't be in the hands of the Turks.

MOORE: And when you lived in this three-story building did your family live alone in that three-story building or was it an apartment? What – what type of house was it?

SEKDORIAN: It was a – a regular house.

MOORE: A regular house that was three stories?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah. Family.

MOORE: And um—

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] Three stories, three stories, yeah.

MOORE: And um, how many rooms would you say there were there?

SEKDORIAN: Uh, bedrooms, you mean?

MOORE: Bedrooms, all—

WIFE: Altogether.

MOORE: Altogether.

SEKDORIAN: I would say about four bedrooms. Four bedrooms, no basement.

MOORE: And was there a garden?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah, there was a garden.

MOORE: Was it a brick house or a wooden house? What was the house made of?

SEKDORIAN: Gosh I cannot tell you (laughs). I – I don't – I don't think it was brick. I don't even –

MOORE: [superposed] You were so small though this is hard to remember. Um, in your garden – what did you grow in the garden? Anything you remember?

SEKDORIAN: No, not – just flowers I think.

MOORE: Flowers. And did you have – what kind of furniture did you have?

SEKDORIAN: Furnitures?

MOORE: Yeah.

WIFE: [not understood] (laughs)

SEKDORIAN: (laughs) Regular furnitures. Not fancy – anything fancy. Not anything fancy.

MOORE: Where – was your house inside town or outside town?

SEKDORIAN: Outside town.

MOORE: And did you keep any animals?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah. They had one cow and my mother used to get the milk and make yogurt, butter – things like that. I remember those things.

MOORE: And did you have anything else but a cow? Did you have dogs, cats?

SEKDORIAN: No, no dogs. No.

WIFE: You don't have no maid?

SEKDORIAN: No I – I think we had one cat. I think we had one cat, yeah.

MOORE: Oh yeah. And who did the cooking in the family?

SEKDORIAN: Who was cooking? My mother.

MOORE: Did you have hired help? Did you have a maid?

SEKDORIAN: Uh, whenever make bread uh – they – when they make those – flat bread, you know – she gets a help – somebody to help her. She [not understood].

MOORE: And the cleaning was done by your mother?

SEKDORIAN: Uh, yeah.

WIFE: But you said that you had a maid to take care of you – four children, five children.

MOORE: Oh you had um, a nanny?

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] W—w—we had – yeah we had – we had a – we had a lady to take care of the children too, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

WIFE: (in background) You told me.

MOORE: Did you – did you help cook at all?

SEKDORIAN: Me?

MOORE: Yeah.

SEKDORIAN: No.

MOORE: And what about the kitchen? What did the kitchen in your house look like, do you remember? You were very small—

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] Kitchen? Uh, over there they have – under the ground, you know -- they burn a – a special wood – warm it – and on top of they put – some square thing. You put your feet, hands – to warm up. I—we didn't have any oil, gasoline. We have gasoline for the lamps, for light. But that's about it, I think.

MOORE: And what was mealtime like when you ate?

SEKDORIAN: Milk?

MOORE: Mealtime, when you ate? When you ate – did you eat together or--?

WIFE: Mealtime.

SEKDORIAN: Oh we ate together, yeah. Oh the whole family sits down together, yeah.

MOORE: And um, w—did you live near other family members? Were there other cousins—

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] My uncle lives next – next door.

MOORE: Oh yeah.

SEKDORIAN: Yeah. And they disappeared and I had to – my – my uncle's daughter died lately in Bulgaria. She was adop—adopted by another Armenian. I don't know how she got there, how she [not understood].

MOORE: How 'bout your grandparents – do you remember your grandparents?

SEKDORIAN: My mother's mother, I remember slightly.

MOORE: Do you remember her name?

SEKDORIAN: No.

MOORE: Um, were you especially close to anyone in the family? Who were you closest to?

SEKDORIAN: Now?

MOORE: No, when you were a small boy. Who was the closest family member to you?

SEKDORIAN: Well my cousin I guess. [not understood] at that time.

MOORE: And uh, who – what is your cousin's name?

SEKDORIAN: First name is George. [not understood] George Vzikian[ph]. He's the one who helped me come to this country. He and his mother – my aunt. Yeah.

MOORE: Were there any characters in your family? People who were unusual that you could tell a story about? Anybody in your family – do you remember any particular member of the family as being – standing out?

SEKDORIAN: Standing out? My older brother is uh – uh – going to American college in Sivas. It's another city. And my old – older sister is – she's going to school – Armenian school and uh – I can't say more. They disappeared. (voices in background) Tragedy, tragedy.

MOORE: What about religion? What was your religious life like?

SEKDORIAN: Our religion? I was a Greek Orthodox.

WIFE: Armenian also. [not understood]

SEKDORIAN: E—Eastern Orthodox.

WIFE: [not understood]

SEKDORIAN: [not understood]

MOORE: Did you have an Orthodox Church nearby your house when you were a child? Did you go to church when you were a child?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah, I [not understood] church.

MOORE: And was it nearby, do you remember?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah, w—walking distance, yeah – walking distance.

WIFE: Can I say something? You know, we went to Shabin Karahisar where he's born about in – back in 19—

MOORE: Seventy-four.

WIFE: Seventy-four.

MOORE: [interposed] For visit.

WIFE: And we went there to find a house and--

MOORE: [interpose] The church

WIFE: The church. We couldn't find anything. They all rebuilt. So it's all changed. There was some [not understood] over there instead of church. You know, all the Turkish families was taken off.

MOORE: Uh huh.

SEKDORIAN: It was changed, yeah.

MOORE: Well when you had a religious – when – what was a day that was religious? Was every Sunday religious for you?

SEKDORIAN: Over there?

MOORE: Yeah.

SEKDORIAN: [not understood]

(recording skips)

MOORE: --prejudice towards your religion there?

SEKDORIAN: Me have prejudice? No.

MOORE: And nobody persecuted you.

SEKDORIAN: Except Turks.

MOORE: Yeah except Turks (both laugh). We just mentioned that. How 'bout, what was the biggest holiday celebration?

SEKDORIAN: I would say Easter, eh? Easter.

WIFE: For our is Easter but in Turkish country it's Ramadan.

MOORE: Yeah.

SEKDORIAN: No, no you mean—

MOORE: But for you, for them.

SEKDORIAN: Easter. Easter I would say, yeah.

MOORE: And how did you celebrate it?

SEKDORIAN: Well usually parents buy new clothes and special food and invite relatives or you go to relatives. That sort of thing.

MOORE: What type of food was special?

SEKDORIAN: (laughs) Gosh, I can't remember. (laughs)

MOORE: Was a lot of food?

SEKDORIAN: Lots of food, yeah.

MOORE: Big feast.

SEKDORIAN: Big feast, yeah.

MOORE: What about school? Do you remember school before EI—when you were very small – when your family was together?

SEKDORIAN: Well I – I didn't go kindergarten, of course. And uh, my other – younger brothers – th—they stay home. They were too young. And we had Armenian teachers, things like that.

MOORE: Do you remember any particular teachers or playmates? Do you remember your teachers then?

SEKDORIAN: No.

MOORE: And what was your favorite subject, do you remember?

SEKDORIAN: Well I [not understood] civil engineer. I got my education over here. And math was uh – I like math. P—p—p—pretty well. That's the reason I took engineering. And that's it.

MOORE: Did you learn – you had – you said already you learned English prior to coming to the States, yeah.

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] Yeah. Because we had English classes over there in the orphanage. I was in orphanage four years. And then when I went to – when they took us to Greece, I spoke English to American supervisors – we had American supervisors there. The important thing is this – American Near East Relief saved our lives. The American Near East Relief saved our lives. It wasn't for that, we were perished. And all these young people. Because the Turks are very vicious. They – the young girls – they eat everything – they young girls.

MOORE: Yeah, yeah. What – when you go back to your childhood do you remember – when you were very small – what type of games you played together? Were there special games that – that were particularly Armenian that you played or--?

SEKDORIAN: No, nothing special.

MOORE: And um, what about – do you have a favorite childhood story that you tell?

SEKDORIAN: I can't remember any.

WIFE: They didn't have a decent childhood, these people . They were all alone on the streets, no home.

MOORE: [superposed] Yeah, yeah, yeah. This is – this is the way [not understood]. When – when – when did you decide to come to the United States?

SEKDORIAN: I came to this country 1924 and one week later was Christmas.

MOORE: W—when did you – when did you get the idea to come? When did you think you're first come?

SEKDORIAN: Well uh – life w—become—became very unbearable. Um, Near East Relief was disintegrating. You know, they couldn't support it. And they'd separate it – some days into Egypt from Greece – well all the an– all the orphan—orphans came to Greece anyway. Some were in Corinth – Greek town – some in Athens, some in Corinth – I was in Corinth. And then Near East Relief was getting weaker and weaker. Probably they couldn't support any longer or whatever. And I had to find something. I wrote my uh, aunt, my cousin – that I must come to America. And I came as – to study here. To study here. I went college. I got my degree in engineering and – and it was unfortunate that we had ten year depression over here.

MOORE: Oh that's right, yeah.

SEKDORIAN: I could—I couldn't find a job. [not understood] So in the gr—I worked in the restaurants as a busboy, you know what that is – busboy?

MOORE: Yes.

SEKDORIAN: I would get three meals a day. (laughs) I didn't wanna be burden to my cousin, you know.

MOORE: Did your cousin pay for you to come over? Did he send you the money?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah, they did, yeah.

MOORE: They sent you the money to come. And did um – what did you have to do to prepare? How did you prepare to leave? Do you remember getting ready to come to the States?

SEKDORIAN: Well Near East Relief officers -- you see – they like me so much over there, I was office boy in headquarters [not understood] – American headquarters. And they helped me [not understood].

MOORE: And were you excited to leave? Were you excited to come?

SEKDORIAN: Well of course I was very happy that I came here, very happy.

MOORE: And um, what did you know about the States – America – before you came?

SEKDORIAN: Well they kn—I knew that it was a safe place – it's a good place, no persecution. And freedom, and I found it.

MOORE: And um—

SEKDORIAN: I found it.

MOORE: Did—did anybody give you a goodbye party? Did you inv—when you were about to leave and you knew you were going to leave—

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] From Greece you mean?

MOORE: Yeah.

SEKDORIAN: No, no.

MOORE: My father said the same thing. What I—what—how much luggage did you take? What did you take with you?

SEKDORIAN: I just had one baggage. I didn't have much (laughs).

MOORE: What did you leave behind?

SEKDORIAN: Well to my two young brothers I d—I discovered – I find my two brothers – they were in different orphanage. Somebody told me that “I know you brothers sh—sh—sh—such and such orphanage i—in Corfu, Greece.” And my other brother was in – in Istanbul. I had no idea. Other people told me. (laughs a lot)

WIFE: But he went and he saw them – didn't you?

SEKDORIAN: Uh-huh.

MOORE: Did you go see them ever?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah I see them. No I didn't go there, but I saw them in Egypt. I t—I took a trip to Egypt – from here, from here.

MOORE: Mm.

SEKDORIAN: Yeah.

MOORE: When – when you first came over here though, when you decided to come to the states – did you bring any food with you at all?

SEKDORIAN: Food? No.

MOORE: Did you take anything special with you -- that was special to you?

SEKDORIAN: No. I came through France.

MOORE: You came through France.

SEKDORIAN: Through France.

MOORE: Um, who came to America with you? Did you come along or—

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] Alone.

MOORE: Alone. And you left from which port in France?

SEKDORIAN: Cherbourg.

MOORE: Cherbourg.

SEKDORIAN: Cherbourg.

MOORE: And how did you get there from Greece?

SEKDORIAN: (clears throat) Well I took a boat. I took a boat, came to Marseille. From Marseille – I want – I always wanted to see Paris. We h—we heard so much about Paris. I went to Paris and from Paris went to Cherbourg.

MOORE: [interposed] Yeah.

SEKDORIAN: Took the boat from there, and came to— (recording skips)

MOORE: [interposed]By boat and train. Is that it? How did you get from Marseille to Paris?

SEKDORIAN: Uh, I think it's the train, yeah.

MOORE: You didn't walk?

SEKDORIAN: (laughs) No, no, no, no, no. Too far away.

MOORE: I know (laughs).

SEKDORIAN: Yeah. No I took it—

WIFE: What the money? Where did you find the money?

MOORE: Yeah, where did you get the money?

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] Well wh—when I work – when I work this Near East Relief office I save my money. I save my money.

MOORE: Oh so you save the money and you get to the port. And your cousin paid you to come over?

SEKDORIAN: No, no. I was office boy—

MOORE: Yeah.

SEKDORIAN: But – and it paid me money. And I saved it.

MOORE: And so you saved it for the whole trip t—over to America?

SEKDORIAN: No, my cousin helped out. But I mean I had s'money with – with me – little money with me.

MOORE: I see, I see. So you went to Paris and from Paris you went to Cherbourg.

SEKDORIAN: Cherbourg, yeah.

MOORE: Ok and um, what was the – do you remember the name – w—how was Paris, by the way? Did you have a good time in Paris?

SEKDORIAN: Paris? Well I – all of us heard about Paris and I wanted to see the Eiffel Tower, ya know. Yeah. I thought it was very close. I walk, I walk, I walk – I couldn't reach – it's too far.

WIFE: (laughs)

MOORE: (laughs) Well you saw it.

SEKDORIAN: I – I just had a dream about it when I was in old country.

WIFE: You saw it?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah.

MOORE: Did you see it? You saw it, right?

SEKDORIAN: I saw it, yeah. I saw it, yeah.

MOORE: [superposed] Oh, good.

WIFE: (laughs) [not understood]

SEKDORIAN: [not understood]

MOORE: Did you have to – when you got to the port when the ship – what was the name of the ship, do you remember?

SEKDORIAN: Uh, it was a British ship. I remember that. No, I don't remember it's name.

MOORE: And did – did you have to wait to depart? Did you stay overnight before you left?

SEKDORIAN: Where?

MOORE: In Cher—in Cherbourg?

SEKDORIAN: Cherbourg, yeah.

MOORE: Did you – w—w—wait?

SEKDORIAN: I – I stayed there. Yeah, I stayed there. Why not?

MOORE: And wh—what did you feel like, when you were waiting?

SEKDORIAN: In Cherbourg?

MOORE: Yeah.

SEKDORIAN: Well, of course meals were – meals were included in Cherbourg. When I got out from the ship – no when I got out from the train they took us to

Cherbourg. I stay there one – one night or two nights. Meals are – meals are included in Cherbourg.

MOORE: Oh yeah.

SEKDORIAN: I was so hungry (everyone laughs). They – they feed me.

MOORE: That's what you remembered.

SEKDORIAN: They feed me, yeah. (everyone laughs) And then when the ship came, I came here.

MOORE: And when did the ship depart? What day? Do you remember when it went over – the year, and the month?

SEKDORIAN: Uh, I can't remember. But I – I can tell you this much. That it was in 1924 just one week before Christmas I came to New York.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. And what about the ship – what was it like on the ship?

SEKDORIAN: Well not – [not understood]. It was English ship, I know that.

MOORE: And did –

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] I have a picture someplace.

MOORE: And what class did you travel? What was your ticket?

SEKDORIAN: Oh, third class maybe (everyone laughs). Cheap—cheap--cheapest.

MOORE: Describe your accommodations. What was it like? How – where did you sleep?

SEKDORIAN: Uh, they – they give uh – they give blankets, I think. Something like that. N—nothing extraordinary, yeah.

MOORE: Where did you eat on the ship?

SEKDORIAN: On the ship? Eh—

MOORE: The dining room?

SEKDORIAN: Dining room, I suppose – yeah.

MOORE: Do you remember much about that? What was the food like?

SEKDORIAN: Uh, no I can't remember. But I was a hungry. Th—th—th—they gave you enough food. They gave you enough food.

MOORE: [superposed] They gave you enough food. Were you allowed up on deck at all?

SEKDORIAN: D--?

MOORE: On the deck of the boat – were you allowed to go up there?

SEKDORIAN: I think so, yeah.

MOORE: What did you see? What do you remember about that boat trip? What did you smell, and hear, and--?

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] Well, I tell you – I was always dreaming about the Statue Liberty, where I set – where I saw Statue Liberty I said “God help me.”

MOORE: And before you saw it was it a rough trip? Was it a rough trip, a smooth trip – what kind of trip was it?

SEKDORIAN: Well it wasn't very smooth, really. [not understood]

MOORE: [superposed] Did you get sick? Did you get ill?

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] It—it—it was something new to me. It was something new to me, going out on ocean.

MOORE: [superposed] And you were how old then? How old were you on this trip?

SEKDORIAN: Well, I can't give you those figure because I don't know (laughs).

MOORE: How 'bout, did you get sick at all on sh—on the voyage? Well you were a young man, you were young.

SEKDORIAN: I was young, yeah.

MOORE: You were young. You were a teenager weren't you?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah.

MOORE: Yeah. So that was a – a – was a v—adventure for you.

SEKDORIAN: Yeah, it was adventure, yeah.

MOORE: But wh—on that trip you said it wasn't smooth. Were a—were people getting sick on the boat? Do you remember any of that?

SEKDORIAN: I don't recall.

MOORE: Ok. Were there any activities on the boat at all?

SEKDORIAN: Not for me, no. I don't think so, no.

MOORE: How long was the trip? About?

SEKDORIAN: I couldn't tell you. I don't remember.

MOORE: Yeah. That's alright. You don't have to remember everything. These are just questions—

SEKDORIAN: Yeah.

MOORE: Alright, so you saw land for the first time. What was the first thing you saw?

SEKDORIAN: Statue of Liberty.

MOORE: And then what did – were there people – everybody looking at it or were you alone? Where were you?

SEKDORIAN: I think there were some others. Others – refugees there. Probably from Russia. There were quite a Russian people on the ship. And – and they took us to the uh – uh – to this island. [not understood] They kept over there for two nights. And finally my cousin came. Now, what I – I went before the judge – judges. He said, "Why you come to America?" I said,

“I’m c—I come here to go school.” “What you gon’ study?”
“Engineering.” And, “Do you – do you know algebra?” “Yes I do.” “[not understood] algebra?” I said, “In an orphanage.” And they ask me some questions – pretty simple questions. I answered, and they ok’d, and – and my cousins waiting outside to take me home . And thanks goodness that was the happiest day of my life.

MOORE: And so when you saw the Statue of Liberty, had you heard about the Statue of Liberty before? Did you know about what it was?

SEKDORIAN: I think – I think so. I think so, yeah.

MOORE: And that was the first thing you saw?

SEKDORIAN: First thing I saw, yeah.

MOORE: And did you see the New York skyline too? Do you remember New York?

SEKDORIAN: I d—I don’t remember. I do not – I have no idea back in Europe.

MOORE: [superposed] You remember the Statue of Liberty.

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] Statue Liberty. Yeah.

MOORE: And you – wh—what did you feel? You felt—

SEKDORIAN: I felt very confident.

WIFE: (laughs)

SEKDORIAN: There's a [not understood] in me, really.

WIFE: (laughs)

MOORE: And what about – um – how did you get from the ship to Ellis Island?
How did you get to Ellis Island? You said it brought you to the island.
Do you remember how you got there?

SEKDORIAN: Well, I suppose the ship was stopped someplace and they took us to the
Ellis Island. And they had many other people – lots of people there. And
– but the beds are side by side you know – [not understood] dormitories -
- side by side. And they feed us pretty good.

MOORE: Well when you first walked in didn't they take you to a big hall?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah.

MOORE: Wh-what would happen? When you first came off the boat, what did you
see first? Do you remember?

SEKDORIAN: No, I don't remember, no. I was – I saw so many people of different
dress, different play.

MOORE: And how were you dressed?

SEKDORIAN: (laughs a lot) Well I – not bad, not bad. (laughs) Not bad.

MOORE: But um, were you frightened or excited or what was your – what did your
feeling the whole time you went to Ellis?

SEKDORIAN: Well, [not understood] I had some fears, yeah. I was some fears that -- I heard that to people I talked to -- some of them were not accepted -- they were sent back. That put a -- some kind of fear in me. And -- but then I came to study here and then they asked me some questions about algebra.

MOORE: Yeah. Well was it cr-- you said it was crowded.

SEKDORIAN: It was very crowded, yeah.

MOORE: And was it clean?

SEKDORIAN: Fairly clean, yeah, I would say so.

MOORE: And were they nice to you -- the staff? Even though they asked you questions, were they -- how did they treat you -- the staff?

SEKDORIAN: Well I d—I didn't have any complaints. I didn't s-- I didn't know any better.

MOORE: (laughs) Did you have a medical examination?

SEKDORIAN: Yes. Yes I had.

MOORE: What was it?

SEKDORIAN: I had medical examination in Athens first -- in Greece. I think after that -- that was it.

MOORE: Ellis Island? At Ellis Island did they check you for anything?

SEKDORIAN: I don't think so. I don't think so.

WIFE: [superposed] Your eyes?

MOORE: How 'bout – how 'bout your eyes?

WIFE: Your eyes?

SEKDORIAN: My eyes?

WIFE: They ch—they didn't check your eyes?

SEKDORIAN: [superposed]They checked my eyes, yeah.

MOORE: They checked your eyes.

WIFE: [not understood]

SEKDORIAN: In – in Athens.

MOORE: In Athens.

SEKDORIAN: In Athens, yeah.

MOORE: [superposed] But you didn't need a medical examination at Ellis?

SEKDORIAN: No, no I never got one.

MOORE: Ok. Um, what was it like staying overnight at Ellis Island when you waited? What did you feel? What did you see?

SEKDORIAN: Well I—I was kinda lonesome and uh, many other – I could speak English but there were many other people who couldn't speak English. Like I said there were lot of Russians, Lithuanians, from Finland, from all over – all over. And some of them been there long time because they – they aren't coming legally. My case is legal.

MOORE: Oh I see.

SEKDORIAN: See I – I have a American council's approval from in Athens.

MOORE: So you had your papers in order—

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] Right.

MOORE: And you had your medical examination before you came here.

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] Right, right.

MOORE: And um, when you slept there – were you sleeping – how were you sleeping in accommodations at Ellis when they made you stay overnight?

SEKDORIAN: Well gr—in cots side by side.

MOORE: Side by side.

SEKDORIAN: Side by side.

MOORE: And all nationalities together?

SEKDORIAN: [not understood]

MOORE: Were there – did you meet any other Armenians?

SEKDORIAN: No. Not a single one.

MOORE: You were the only Armenian?

SEKDORIAN: Oh may—maybe if there were any I – I -- I wouldn't know it too because there is lot of people there – I wouldn't know it.

MOORE: And were you entertained there? Was there any entertainment?

SEKDORIAN: No, no entertainment.

MOORE: And who came to meet you then? Your cousin?

SEKDORIAN: My cousin.

MOORE: This is the same cousin who helped you come over?

SEKDORIAN: Right.

MOORE: And his name is George.

SEKDORIAN: George.

MOORE: Right. And um, how did you leave Ellis Island and where did you go to?

SEKDORIAN: Well he took me directly home.

MOORE: To his home which is where?

SEKDORIAN: Uh (pause) they living in uh (pause) I think Ridge—Ridgewood –
Ridgewood, I think.

MOORE: Ridgewood, New Jersey?

SEKDORIAN: No, no, not New Jersey. Long Island.

MOORE: Oh Long Island, ok.

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] Long Island, yeah. It was Ridgewood or uh, Flushing or,
around there someplace. Yeah.

MOORE: And what did you – what were your first impressions when you got
there?

SEKDORIAN: Well I was little shy. I got nothing to offer to them and they did a – such
a great sacrifice to me. I felt very small and uh – but then I got used to it.
They – they were very kind to me and just like their own son.

MOORE: Well what were your expectations about the United States before you
came? What did you think about the country before you came?

SEKDORIAN: Well I knew that it's a safe place, is a future, and no Turks (everyone
laughs).

WIFE: You're escaped from them, huh?

MOORE: Did you – when you first got to – to your cousin's house – was there
anything you remember you never saw before? What were your first
impressions of things that you had never seen.

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] Well, they had prepared a lot of good food there that I enjoyed.

MOORE: Everything's around food (laughs).

WIFE: He was hungry, he has to eat! (laughs).

SEKDORIAN: And uh, my aunt took very good care of me. And I got used to – day by day I got used to the place.

MOORE: Was there anything you couldn't do when you first got here that you were unused to doing? Do you remember being – at the beginning – not knowing what was going on because you just preferred somewhere else?

SEKDORIAN: Um, not really.

MOORE: You were so young it doesn't – your—ok and um, what was the neighborhood like, where you went to?

SEKDORIAN: Huh?

MOORE: The neighborhood – how was that?

SEKDORIAN: Neighborhood – they were living in Flushing – in Flushing Brook—Brooklyn. They were living in Brooklyn. I remember yeah.

MOORE: Ok, alright.

SEKDORIAN: I remember, yeah. Well it was um, congested. There weren't individual homes. Not many, at least. And uh, by -- day by day I got used to the place.

MOORE: Did you get along well with the neighbors there?

SEKDORIAN: I didn't know them. (laughs)

MOORE: And what jobs in America did your family members have? What did you—

SEKDORIAN: Uh, my cousin was a printer. He would [not understood]. He was making very good money. But I don't wanna depended on him too much. I wanted to be on my own. So I went to high school and graduated and then depression came over and I went to college – Indiana.

MOORE: Indiana University?

SEKDORIAN: Tri-State University in – in Indiana.

MOORE: Yeah, ok.

SEKDORIAN: Uh, I got my degree from there – bachelor. Bachelor so I was in civil engineering and I took some graduate courses in Columbia University when I came back to New York.

WIFE: (laughs) [not understood]

SEKDORIAN: And then, no jobs. I go from one a—agent to another to get a job – no experience. I go to American Society of Civil Engineers. I remember the

man's name [not understood] Parker. He got so used to me. (everyone laughs) Ah, the depression was very long -- almost eight years. And Roosevelt came -- he is my most praised and most preferred president. (MOORE and WIFE laugh).

MOORE: Um, did you—

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] He -- he uh -- he established his WPA -- PWA -- I got WPA job -- and I got civil experience in engineering -- civil engineering. When I go some place to apply for engineering I don't say I don't have any experience. I say I have experience.

WIFE: You lied.

SEKDORIAN: So I start -- Well, you -- you gotta exaggerate little bit otherwise you're out.

MOORE: (laughs)

SEKDORIAN: And I start as a draftsman -- drawings. I became proficient in drafting, then I said I'm designer. Then I became a structural designer -- structural designer. When I apply for a job I say I have experience in structural designing. [not understood] industrial building -- that sort of thing. And I change from one company to another, I get more experience. Then I ask more money. And sometimes they send me out of town -- they send to Chicago, they send me to Kentucky -- worked there six months. Chicago, one year. I got more and more proficient in civil engineering -- structural engineering. I became very good in reinforce concrete foundations -- heavy foundations. And to make a long story short, the best job I ever had in my life -- General Motors. I work at

General Motors fifteen years and I'm retired from them. I get health insurance, I get pension, and –

WIFE: What kind of benefits?

SEKDORIAN: Huh? Health benefits.

MOORE: If I can bring you back a little bit – just a little bit – back a little farther. Do you remember when you first went to high school here – came – just came over – did – were you treated well by other students? Did people treat you nicely?

SEKDORIAN: Well the high school I went was Springfield, Massachusetts. There were a lot of foreign students there.

MOORE: How did you get to Springfield, Massachusetts?

SEKDORIAN: I knew another man in Athens who – I got acquainted with him – and when he went -- he got to school, he wrote to me that – come this school here, where I am.

MOORE: So you went to high school in Massachusetts actually?

SEKDORIAN: Right.

MOORE: And you're in Springfield. And were you the only—

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] Now what that I meant is it – this friend of mine who—whom I knew from Athens. He was an old friend, though – he's Armenian.

MOORE: And where did you live then?

SEKDORIAN: Where?

MOORE: In – in Massachusetts. With whom did you live? With what family?

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] In the school – Springfield? Dormitories.

MOORE: Oh! And did you have a s—how did you get that – a scholarship? Did you have a s—

WIFE: [not understood]

SEKDORIAN: Well they – for those who needed money, they helped.

MOORE: So you had a scholarship then.

SEKDORIAN: A—and then I borrowed some money from my cousin. I – I – I did very well. On vacation times I went to (laughs) Northampton nut house.

MOORE: You mean the – the mental hospital?

SEKDORIAN: Nut house. You know, where crazy people are.

MOORE: Yeah mental hospital.

SEKDORIAN: Mental hospital, yeah.

MOORE: (laughs) The North Hampton nut house?

SEKDORIAN: As an – as in – as an attendant – attendant, you know.

MOORE: Oh yeah.

SEKDORIAN: Summer vacation I make money over there and when I go back to school again – high school. I have s—part of tuition. They help me with tuition. And then they gave me little job in the library. I – I work – I manage. I manage pretty good.

WIFE: You used to work during the night and he used to go to school during the day. That's what he told me.

SEKDORIAN: [not understood]

MOORE: Well w—alright so you were in Massachusetts and then when you were in Massachusetts – when you went there – were you the – were you the only foreigner or—

SEKDORIAN: Oh no, no, no. There were lot of foreigners.

MOORE: And Armenians too?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah, Armenians too.

MOORE: So you weren't alone?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah. It's called American International College but I was in high school department.

MOORE: I see.

SEKDORIAN: In high school department. See they have a college department. They have a lot -- lot of foreign students.

MOORE: Now how did you get from there—

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] Uh huh.

MOORE: Out to Indiana?

SEKDORIAN: Well, when I graduated from the high school I went back to New York. And the same friend that recommended this high school – he went to Tri-State University – he said it's good place to go and it's cheaper too. So I want to work there myself.

WIFE: (laughs)

SEKDORIAN: One thing leads to another – very interesting, isn't it?

MOORE: Well when you came here—

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] I had a very colorful life.

MOORE: Um, when you came here was it difficult – the English at the beginning – learning – you knew English already, some but –

SEKDORIAN: Well I had an accent of course – foreign accent. But I was in American crowd most of time. When I went to Columbia University I lived in international house. You ever heard that place?

MOORE: I – I'm from Columbia University. I'm getting my doctorate there.

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] You are? Oh. I lived in intern—internatio—international house. And then I took courses at the Columbia University.

MOORE: That's a great place, by the way.

SEKDORIAN: [not understood]

MOORE: (laughs)

SEKDORIAN: Wasn't easy.

MOORE: Yeah.

SEKDORIAN: And then of course my free time – I worked in cafeteria – busboy. You know what that is – busboy?

MOORE: Yeah.

SEKDORIAN: Take the plates fr—from the tables to the kitchen. Back and forth – back forth. Make some money and get my meals. And—

MOORE: So that was graduate school, you were doing at Columbia? Or was it undergraduate?

SEKDORIAN: No, no, no. It – it was – I had my degree but I was taking some graduate courses there.

MOORE: Graduate courses, right. Ok.

SEKDORIAN: [superposed] Yeah, yeah. But there was quite a few Armenians there too. There was Armenian club over there and there's some Armenian ladies in Barnard University -- Barnard College.

MOORE: Yes.

SEKDORIAN: Yeah.

MOORE: I taught at Barnard College.

SEKDORIAN: Yeah. You taught?

MOORE: Yeah.

SEKDORIAN: Oh.

MOORE: But what was um – did you have any bigotry or persecution here when you came here? Did – was anybody prejudiced against you?

SEKDORIAN: [long pause] Not really. Not really. I – I was such a easy going fella.

MOORE: What about religious life? Did you continue your religious life here in the states?

SEKDORIAN: [not understood]

MOORE: [interposed] Armenian.

SEKDORIAN: Armenian church, yeah. When I was in Indiana or other cities I would go American church – Presbyterian church or Methodist church. Yeah.

MOORE: Did you ever return to Armenia?

SEKDORIAN: We went together visit. And uh—

MOORE: What year was that?

SEKDORIAN: When was that?

MOORE: 1974.

SEKDORIAN: 1984, was it?

WIFE: No, no – '74.

SEKDORIAN: 1974, yeah. I visit.

MOORE: In general would you say that you are satisfied or dissatisfied with life in America?

SEKDORIAN: No. Great place. Great place. No other place.

WIFE: He always says there's no place like America.

MOORE: So, to put it otherwise, you say you're actually very satisfied for having come?

SEKDORIAN: Oh absolutely, absolutely. (laughs) There's another thing. When I came -- over here to study, you know -- and there were many people here from Russia, Poland, other places -- man without country. And I was one of them -- man without country. And I -- when I finished my studies I was supposed to go back but Greece wouldn't accept me, Turkey would not accept me. I was one of those men without country. But law passed that those who are without country -- they can become citizens. So I became citizen -- American citizen.

MOORE: When was that? When did you become a citizen?

SEKDORIAN: I would say 1936 – ‘round there – ‘round that time. And of course 1942 I was drafted in the army in a combat – combat [not understood].

MOORE: [superposed] In the American army?

SEKDORIAN: American army, yeah. [not understood]

MOORE: Oh yeah, and where did you go?

SEKDORIAN: I didn't go any place because for – for a while I was – specialized in [not understood] bridges, bailey bridges, foot bridges – so soldiers can walk. I – I – I taught some of those things, yeah.

MOORE: So you used your engineering skills in the army?

SEKDORIAN: Engineering skills, yeah, engineering skills. They send me – first they send me to University of M—M—University of Minnesota to take some graduate courses over there. Train me on this army pertaining to engineering used in the army. I think six months – after six months they did away with that. They send me back to the base again to other b— where I was training – my basic tr—I think my basic training, there was Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. And they send me to Oregon. Oregon, not Portland. It's close to Portland, Oregon. There's a camp over there. And (coughs) –

MOORE: So you were in Oregon and then finally what happened – where did you end up during the war?

SEKDORIAN: Well, when I went to Oregon there was a port of embarkation. Sent me to – to Far East. But the war getting close to the (coughs) – to the end. And I was discharged, so I went back to New York.

MOORE: Did you ever – any family members ever join you here? Did you ever have your brothers come here or –

WIFE: Yes.

SEKDORIAN: Yeah, when my brothers were in Egypt – one brother went to Armenia – he wished he didn't go 'cause it's tough over there. The other one remain in Egypt and later on I helped them to come over here. But both – they both are dead now. I'm the oldest one of the two brothers.

MOORE: Is your – your cousin still alive? [no response] And was it a – it was a big just—adjustment?

SEKDORIAN: Adjustment?

MOORE: In general, here?

SEKDORIAN: Adjustment?

MOORE: That's one of our questions is – whether or not life – when you first came here, you said you were very happy to be here.

SEKDORIAN: Yeah.

MOORE: But it was very challenging for you.

SEKDORIAN: Yeah.

MOORE: And the adjustment was rather great.

SEKDORIAN: Yeah.

MOORE: But um, in that time was there any family tragedy other than – anything happen?

SEKDORIAN: No. My brothers were occupied in Egypt – in Egypt. But the older one went to Armenia – who shouldn't have gone there. Was a communist place and myself and my wife tried to bring them over here. They came to America.

MOORE: Um, and then when you got – after the war, how did you – how did you meet your wife and how did you – what happened after?

SEKDORIAN: (laughs) Well it was time that I get married (laughs). I behaved myself very well. I saved my money, I saved my money. And I went – I went Armenian church and the people knew that I was a bachelor and available and – and she was a – came from Istanbul. She has [not understood]

WIFE: [not understood]

SEKDORIAN: She [not understood]. Her brother was – is dentist. Her father was dentist. She comes from very nice family – Istanbul. And they introduced me to her. I said to myself, she couldn't be bad girl, come from nice family. So we got married.

MOORE: Like that?

WIFE: No, that wasn't that easy. He couldn't make – make me smile. You know, and I came as a visitor. My time was over and still he cannot decide. So the lady that I was living with said why are you afraid of? Why don't you get – why don't you engage to [not understood], do something. Said "Oh, I am afraid." She said –

SEKDORIAN: [interposed] Well of course (laughs).

WIFE: [not understood] nice girl or something. So the next day she came – he came to take picture of himself to tell me that that's sent to me mother – this picture. I said did you make your mind? Yes I did, he said. So—

MOORE: So you met in church, actually?

WIFE: Actually we were met at the church.

MOORE: And how old were you then?

SEKDORIAN: I was fifty five and she was much younger than I was. I was fifty five, yeah.

MOORE: So you waited quite old to get – older to get married?

SEKDORIAN: Well it's – you know, it's economic conditions, you know. When you get married you gotta have a home, you gotta have support. It's not easy. But I saved my money. I didn't do anything mischievous. Honest money, honest money, honest money. (WIFE laughs) And here is a home – you can see it, all paid out. And a lovely wife.

MOORE: Now were you fifty five or was that in 1955? When – when was this year that you met?

WIFE: It was 1958.

MOORE: 1958.

WIFE: We met in – we got married 1959.

MOORE: And you were fifty five then?

SEKDORIAN: I was fifty five, yeah.

MOORE: And so, so after that you lived here, in this city?

SEKDORIAN: No we were in Detroit.

WIFE: We were in other house, in Detroit.

SEKDORIAN: Detroit. And the neighbors change so we bought this house.

WIFE: [not understood] That's seventeen years – that's been in this house.

MOORE: And in conclusion, are you happy you came to America?

SEKDORIAN: Oh, if I'm happy – oh – what a question. (laughs) No other place I can think of.

MOORE: Well that's a good place to end. And is there anything else you'd like to say – about your life? Anything else that you can think of?

SEKDORIAN: Well I'm very happy because my health is good. I have a lovely wife. And she helps me a lot. Her brother is dentist, retired now. And she has a niece in New Jersey. She got her PhD in neuropsych—psychiatry.

WIFE: No, neuro—neuroscience. Neuroscience.

SEKDORIAN: Yeah, she comes from Istanbul – every bright girl. She started high – graduate high school from here. Graduate from [not understood] University. Scholarship at Rutgers University, got PhD couple years ago.

WIFE: One year.

SEKDORIAN: One year ago. And she – but she – professor over there. But she got married and South American man. They have a little baby and

WIFE: Very happy.

SEKDORIAN: Very happy, yeah.

MOORE: Did you have children ever? Did you?

SEKDORIAN: No, we didn't have children, no.

MOORE: So you have – but you have your relatives? You have your family too?

SEKDORIAN: Yeah. Yeah her brother is a retired dentist. He's a dentist – he was a very prominent dentist in Istanbul.

MOORE: But you are Armenian, actually, yes?

WIFE: Yes, yeah.

MOORE: Yeah. Living in Istan—living in Istanbul.

SEKDORIAN: One thing. In Istanbul, they took all the prominent Armenian male, killed them, but they didn't [not understood] boys or girls and women. They didn't touch. [not understood] But entire cities, they completely destroyed.

MOORE: Well I'd like to thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to speak with you.

SEKDORIAN: Well I'm very grateful to you [not understood]. You are such a very pleasant, very charming lady.

MOORE: Well this is – this is Kate Moore then, signing off with Vahe Sekdorian on the fourth of December, 1993 for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

END OF INTERVIEW